PROJETO BIODIVERSIDADE

Impact Report

2025

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Executive Summary

2025 was a year of both celebrations and changes for Projeto Biodiversidade. We celebrated our 10-year anniversary, and we did it together with the community and partners that have been supporting us during these last years. On the other side, the organization was challenged by big changes in our teams, several multiyear projects finishing and the sudden withdrawal of US funds. Despite that, we rapidly adapted to the new situation, restructuring the team and welcoming new members, and mobilizing donors that did not hesitate to support Cabo Verde conservation in this difficult year. This is, in fact, a direct result of years of conservation success and organization strengthening.

Under this changing scenario, our organization achieved important milestones such as the presentation of a proposal for a new Marine Protected Area, together with the community, covering an area of 2.833 ha of critical habitat for sharks, including the only-known lemon shark nursery in east Atlantic, the undergoing restoration of over 85 ha of coastal dune ecosystem, the launch of our renewed website and the lowest total number of poached sea turtles registered in a season.

In this Impact Report we present the highlights of 2025 from each programme, including milestones, challenges and lessons learnt, as well as a summary of the financial report.

Key Impact 2025

The following key figures summarize some measurable outcomes across marine conservation, ecosystem restoration, community engagement, and organizational development in 2025.

Marine Conservation

16.830 Loggerhead nests registered

85.503 Hatchlings released

1 MPA proposal submitted

1 ISRA declared in Sal

Ecosystem Restoration

105+ ha Land under restoration

1.100+ Native plants reintroduced

305 Seabirds ringed

10 Osprey chicks ringed & fletched

Community Engagement

662 Volunteers joined our activities

134 Activities organized

20 tonnes Waste collected

71 Staff hired

Environmental education

10 TV programmes broadcasted

104 Radio programmes emitted

+69% More visitors to our conservation centre

Organisational Development

This year was marked by important changes in our team, staff turnover, and new recruitments to strengthen key programs. We started the year with 27 permanent staff, and five other providing regular services. From those, 12 were women (39%) and 19 men (61%), with only five international members. However, by the end of the year the team had reduced to 23 permanent and only one service provider (8W and 16M). Although the reduced team, the organisation continued to implement most of the planned activities. At the same time, internal discussions started to plan how the organization will adapt to the current situation with a local shortage of qualified staff, and the difficulties to attract skilled workers due to the increase of living coast and the habitational crisis of the island.

In a summary, the following initiatives were implemented towards the implementation of our Strategic Plan (2024-2028):

- In line with Priority 4.1 of our Strategic Plan, significant progress was made in 2025 toward securing a permanent headquarters. Due to the housing crisis on Sal, we shifted from purchasing property to acquiring land, and by year's end Turinvest committed to donate a 2,000 m² plot in Santa Maria, currently under legal transfer. We also began discussions with MASS Design Group's Africa Studio to design a conservation campus integrating offices, marine operations, volunteer and staff accommodation, education spaces, and a small wildlife first-aid facility. This development is particularly strategic given that facilities and rents represented our third largest expenditure in 2025, exceeding €36,400 annually.

- In 2025, we sought to strengthen the organisation by recruiting key positions identified in the Strategic Plan (R4.1.3). A Digital Marketing Officer and a Volunteering Programme Coordinator were hired in May to enhance online fundraising capacity, improve donor quality, and implement a CRM system. In September, a new communications intern joined the team and, following a successful internship, is expected to transition into a permanent role in February 2026. However, by the end of the year, several newly recruited staff members unexpectedly left, including the Digital Marketing Officer, the Dune Restoration Coordinator, and the Marine Programme Coordinator. In 2026, we will focus on rebuilding and restructuring the team to ensure greater stability and organisational resilience.

- Across the year, the fundraising and sustainable tourism program also advanced the redesign of our website and the implementation of a new educational exhibition on sea turtles (R3.2.2). By the end of 2025, **the organization has increase fundraising by 15%**, increasing the amount of unrestricted funds to 26% of the total budget.

- With the new marketing strategy and tools created in 2024, and the arrival of our new volunteering programme coordinator, in 2025 we reached our record of international volunteers participating, with a total of **127 volunteers coming from 14 different countries, and increase of 61%** from 2024, a sign of the strengthening of our volunteer department (Strategy 4.4 of the Strategic Plan).

Partnerships and projects

2025 started, first, with the uncertainty of the continuation, and later, with the **cancelation of funds from the US Government**. Since the beginning of Project Biodiversity work, in 2015, the organisation had counted with the support of the Marine Turtle Conservation Act Fund from the NOAA for our sea turtle conservation campaign, representing 25-30% of the total budget. In addition, in November 2024 we launched a new dune restoration project, also to be implemented in Boa Vista, funded by the US Embassy. By February, this project was terminated. Despite this, **the planned work continued thanks to the support of the philanthropic organisations** McPike-Zima Foundation, that supported our entire terrestrial programme, and Hans Wilsdorf Fountation, supporting sea turtle conservation.

In fact, we transformed the challenge of the US aid termination to an opportunity to consolidate the growth and role of TAOLA+ network. In a collective initiative, led by Project Biodiversity, **we presented the first nation-wide fund proposal**. The grant, valued at more than 500.000€, is being coordinated by the network instead of managed by a larger international NGO.

During the year, the organisation saw other **four long-term projects arriving at their end**. In March, our shark conservation project in Parda Reef, funded by the *Programme des Petites Initiatives*, and the nation-wide initiative to reduce by-catch in artisanal fisheries, coordinated by BirdLife International and funded by the Darwin Initiative, finished after three years of implementation. By the end of the year, the 3rd phase of the Turtle Aid programme from Tui Care Foundation and the nation-wide seabird conservation, both three year-long projects, finished.

On the other side, **new partnerships and projects started to shape during 2025**. In one side, the PRCM's RESILAO programme accepted our proposal to support the two-year dune restoration project for Sal and Boa Vista with 80.000€, launched in January 2026. TUI Care Foundation informed us that in 2026 we will also launch a new three-year phase of the Turtle Aid programme, this time expanding activities to support other conservation initiatives from Boa Vista, São Vicente and Santo Antão (≈358.000€). Finally, by the end of 2025, a **new project proposal resulting from another collaborative nation-wide effort** was submitted to the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation to support seabird conservation in Cabo Verde for the next three years. This project is the first national-led conservation initiative to reach all the islands and islets of the archipelago.

Capacity Building Initiatives

Throughout 2025, different members of the team participated in several capacity building activities, strengthening both technical and organizational skills, some of them supported totally or partially by the grant.

- Our staff joined the **Cabo Verde Plant Conservation Week** in Fogo and Brava, sharing lessons from Sal and exchanging knowledge with practitioners from five conservation NGOs and national authorities on native flora protection and restoration.
- Our Executive Director took part in the first Forum PPI in Senegal, where over 100 conservation NGOs and stakeholders from 28 African countries met to share experiences: our organization presented in four sessions, covering international volunteering, the Guardians of the Sea program, the use of drones, and work with the tourism sector.

- Marine program coordinators attended a week-long training on Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA), gender analysis, and mapping marine resource use, as part of a nation-wide initiative to strengthen MPA management in Cabo Verde.
- The Director of Finances and Human Resources participated in the first International Forum of Women and the Challenges of Development in the capital of Cabo Verde.
- Our Marine Conservation Coordinator participated in the **UN Ocean Conference** (UNOC) in Nice, speaking in a panel co-hosted by Fauna & Flora and the Shark Conservation Fund about the role of sharks, presenting Parda Reef as a case study of how living sharks can benefit biodiversity and local economies.
- In the last quarter, our Education and Awareness Coordinator, Alcides Semedo, joined a fundraising workshop in Praia alongside staff from other NGOs, improving our internal fundraising capacity.
- In November, our team organized and participated in a two-day capacity building workshop about cetacean rescue with the British Divers Marine Life Rescue group, where we learn how to react in case of strandings and we acquired some important equipment.

Finally, our director participated in the **IUCN World Conservation Congress** in Abu Dhabi, coinciding with the submission of our IUCN membership application. This participation was made possible thanks to the continued collaboration and support of the *Programme de Petites Initiatives* (PPI) and McPike-Zima Foundation. Together with Bios.CV and the Turtle Foundation, we had the opportunity to represent 17 Cabo Verdean NGOs in a roundtable discussion with major conservation funding organizations, including the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), *Programme des Petites Initiatives* (PPI), Fondation Franklinia, and Fondation Hans Wilsdorf. These institutions continue to demonstrate essential and ongoing support for the protection of Cabo Verde's environment and biodiversity.

Figure 1 – Participation in the UN Oceans Conference in Nice, where our Marine Coordinator presented the conservation work done in Parda Reef (left), and in the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi, where our Director participated in several events and met with some international partners.

Figure 2 – Training in cetacean stranding response British Divers Marine Life Rescue group and the participation of staff from different water sports companies.

Report on the different Organization Programs:

1. Terrestrial Program Conservation Programme

Although the Terrestrial Program team went through a complete restructuration of the team, all the planned activities were implemented with success.

- **Costa da Fragata Nature Reserve**

The terrestrial conservation team focused on restoring and protecting highly degraded dune areas in the Costa Fragata Nature Reserve, combining plant production, sand traps, fencing, research and environmental education.

In 2025 we finalised the fencing of most of the coastal area of the Nature Reserve. With the **installation of 1.435 wooden posts, we reached a total length of 4.300 meters of protective fences** in place. This allowed us to reduce the activities that for many years have degraded this important coastal dune habitat, including off-road driving and horse riding. In total, **over 85 hectares are now under protection and restoration**, equivalent to 119 football fields, and representing almost 26% of all the terrestrial component of the Protected Area. The conclusion of the fencing was preceded by the **improvement of near 1,4 kilometres of the official Protected Areas access roads**, which contributed to convince users to stop driving off-road. The work, which costed 20.000€, was funded by TUI.

Figure 4 - – In the left, map with the state of the projected fencing and restoration areas. In the right, the new and improved road with its coastal side fenced off in Costa Fragata.

After finalizing the fencing, we were able to start the dune restoration process at larger scale. After importing cane from different islands (Boa Vista and São Nicolau), **we installed a total of 175 small sand traps** in five different degraded areas. Sand traps are designed to boost dune restoration by slowing down wind and "trapping" the sand carried by it. This technic is essential in areas completely depleted of sand, where dune building plants can't survive because of the high salinity and wind is too strong to allow the natural deposition of sand and seeds. After the first week of strong winds in December, some of the sand traps already started to form small dunes.

In November we concluded also the **plantation of 1.104 native plants** in the reserve, after the organisation of a large planting event with a group of more than 200 visitors. The event allowed us to plant over 800 plants in one single day, while we received a donation of 40€ per each participant. From the 1.104 plants, 810 were *Tetraena fontanesii*, 135 were *Arthrocaulon franzii*, 101 *Tamarix senegalensis*, 50 *Polycarpaea caboverdiana* and 8 *Suaeda caboverdiana*, the last two species being endemic. Sadly, unexpected and very rare heavy rain at the end of November and beginning of December, flooded some of the areas recently planted, drastically reducing the survival of plants.

Figure 5 – Installation of sand traps in degraded areas before the windiest season of the year. The traps are made with cane imported from other islands, where is considered as an invasive species. In other areas with more sand, plants produced in our nursery were planted in order to retain sand naturally (bottom).

The restoration work in the Nature Reserve will continue in the following years. This will be possible thanks to the implementation of two new projects that will complement each other. The first one, funded by the PRCM through their RESILAO program, and the second, funded by the Spanish International Cooperation Agency, led by the National Directorate of Environment. However, most of the activities will be implemented by our organization and will focus to scale-up the results achieved so far. Three priority action lines, along with the continuation of restoration measures will be **i) capacity building and governance at national level, ii) sustainable tourism integration in the reserves, and iii) community participation and awareness through direct participation.**

A MSc student from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria joined the team to study foredune vegetation and wind geomorphology, relating variables such as species richness and cover to sea turtle nesting. Through a new partnership with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC), we improved the understanding on how locals, tourists, and economic actors perceive the reserve, in order to support more effective management policies that incorporate these diverse perspectives. A report is being finalised at the moment and the results will be presented in a Congress of Geomorphology. Complementary mapping of water table depth and groundwater salinity showed higher salinity near the old salt mines and identified hypersaline groundwater at shallow depth in degraded areas, highlighting challenges for plant-based restoration. Oral history interviews with elders from different communities helped reconstruct the historical distribution and uses of native plant species, including the use of endemic *Acacia caboverdeana* for boat building.

These research and conservation work have also been shared at national level with the **broadcast of two mini documentaries** produced by our team. The first one, focuses on the importance and traditional use of **endemic plants**, serving as a sort of historical register for the generations to come. The second one, showcases the **importance of the coastal dunes** from different points of view (community, conservation and tourism). Both programs are being broadcasted by the national TV channel TCSM.

Figure 6 - The survey of foredunes consisted in registering vegetation coverture and plant diversity along the coast (left). We conducted several interviews with elderly form different communities to reconstruct historical

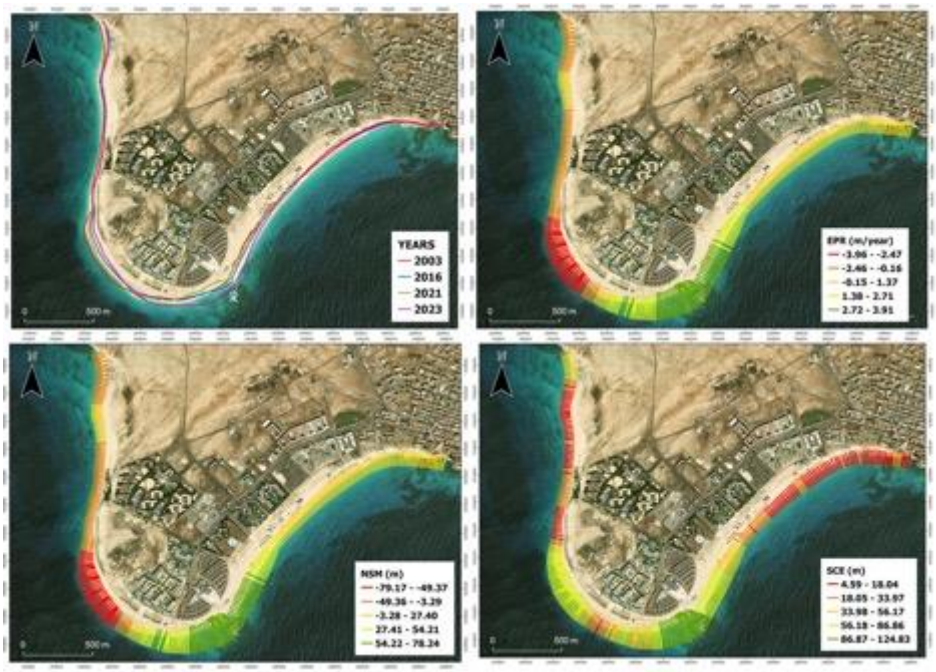

Figure 7 - Sink-zone digital shoreline analysis results for the ecosystem diagnosis

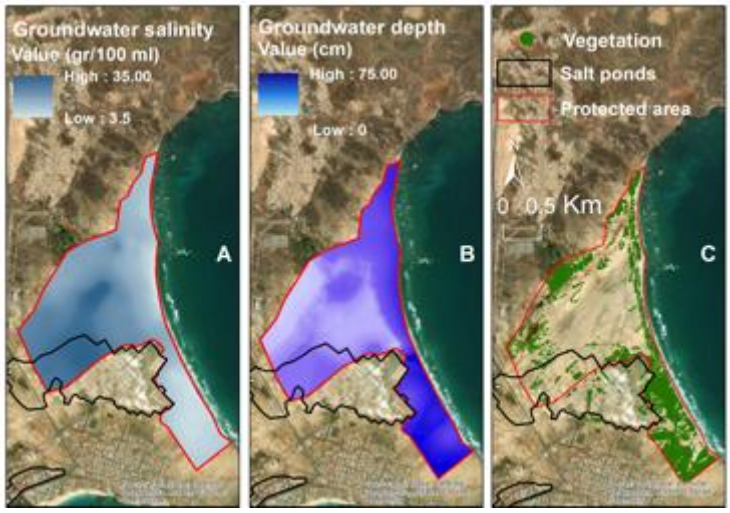

Figure 8 - Some of the results of the study on the salinity of ground water (A), water-table depth (B) and vegetation *coverture (C) of all the area of the Nature Reserve of Costa Fragata.*

- **Ponta do Sinó Nature Reserve**

In 2025, Ponta Sinó became the third Nature Reserve in Sal with an improved management. This was possible thanks to a joint project with the National Directorate of Environment, the company RIU Hotels and Resorts and our organization, becoming this the first Private Public Partnership (PPP) of its kind in Cabo Verde. By the middle of the year, 23 hectares of coastal sand dunes and seasonal wetlands were fenced off, reducing off-road driving and, consequently, the disturbance to breeding birds. At the same time, we designed and installed four official Protected Area panels.

The next phases of the project, the installation of bridge walkways and an interpretation centre, were halted indeterminately after a sentence from a court came out unexpectedly. The case, from 2017, gave the reason to a person that declared the ownership of part of the Protected Area before it was declared. Although the sentence is from 2024, it only came to the knowledge to the project partners last year. By November, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environment had already approved the new delimitation of the area, excluding the plot of land, and questioning the future of the conservation project. To date, our organization is waiting for news regarding this Protected Area.

Figure 9 – New fence and signs in the Protected Area of Ponta Sinó, a coastal dune and wetlands reserve. The area in the pictures has been declassified and is now part of a development area for tourism.

- **Endemic Palm Tree conservation**

The conservation of Phoenix atlantica in Algodoeiro and Beirona oases remained a key component of the terrestrial program, combining irrigation, invasive species control, soil management and population monitoring.

Throughout the year we continued compensatory watering of adult and juvenile palms, with juveniles receiving approximately 50 litres every three weeks to minimize stress during their critical establishment phase. Basins around the plants were adapted to their growing size to improve water retention, and invasive acacias (now called Neltuma juliflora, previously Prosopis juliflora) were removed and pruned around the oases to reduce competition and promote native vegetation recovery. Seed collection at the end of 2024 allowed us to plant around 250 Phoenix atlantica seeds using a traditional “escaldão” germination technique, with 220 new palm trees ready to be transplanted by the end of 2025.

During the second quarter, we rehabilitated an old water tank, increasing its capacity to 11 tonnes and improved irrigation system. A buried irrigation system with pipes, filters and drippers was installed to reach all juvenile and remaining adult palms, enabling a 25-minute irrigation cycle every 7 days during the hottest period, extendable to 15–21 days in cooler periods; each juvenile receives 15–20 litres and each adult around 50 litres, while pruning residues and stones on the soil surface reduce evaporation. This reduced watering time from a full day to about 25 minutes and cutting water-truck use from two per month to one every 2–3 months.

In addition to watering, organic fertilization with goat manure, sourced from local farmers, improved soil conditions, enhanced palm growth and vigour, and supported the local economy. We conducted a full census of *Phoenix atlantica* on Sal, conducted from 2 to 16 July, registered 236 individuals (65 adults and 171 juveniles), with 12 showing doubtful endemic traits and over 149 dead individuals recorded in various states of degradation.

A wood shredder was purchased to process pruning residues and acacia wood, helping prevent acacia spread, reducing wildfire risk, and improving the aesthetics of the oases. During 2026 we will test the production of organic fertilizer from pruning residues and will increase water retention using them together with the goat manure.

Figure 10 – Rehabilitation of the water deposit (top left) and installation of the drip watering system in the oases of Beirona (top right). The new system increased the water efficiency and reduced time and costs (bottom).

Figure 11 – The application of goat manure helped improve the soil conditions, while watering in the oases of Algodoeiro continued being manual (left). A new island census helped us map all the endemic palm trees of the island, like the one seen in the right picture.

2. Sea Turtle Conservation Campaign

The nesting season of 2025 ended with **16.830 nests recorded**, with all data analysed. This is slightly higher than 2022, but still far from the numbers of previous years. The team covered a total of **25,5 km of fully or partially daily patrols**, while through weekly island censuses, we increased this number to 33,9 km. A total of 3.336 nesting turtles is estimated to have nested last year in Sal (averaging 5 nests per nesting turtle). From those turtles, **1.599 were tagged with PIT tags** (Passive Integrative Transponders), while another 548 were found already tagged.

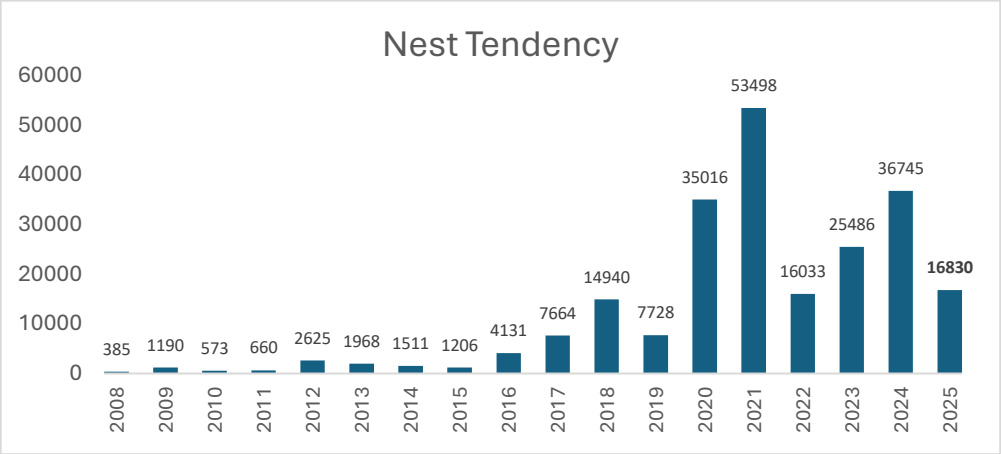

Figure 11 – Tendency of the number of nests since 2008, when we have the first registers.

The permanent patrol team was comprised of six coordinators (four local and two international), 42 local field assistants, 12 international field assistants, two drivers and two drone pilots. In 2025, the turtle protection activities were supported by 110 international volunteers. A total of 35 national volunteers were involved in 2025, many of them from the fishermen's associations of Santa Maria and Palmeira that patrolled the nearby beaches of Fontona and Igrejinha. 10 of these volunteers were from our program of Young Environmental Ambassadors, ages 18-22, as part of the ongoing project from the education and outreach program. In total, **209 people were involved in the patrol strategy** of 2025.

Figure 12 – Local team in charge of the patrols in the Protected Area of Murdeira Bay (left), and sea turtle field team in the new camp at Costa Fragata Nature Reserve (right).

A total of 2,689 nests (16% of all recorded nests) were relocated, of which 1,606 were transferred to one of the three conservation hatcheries. From those, **85.503 hatchlings were safely released to the ocean**, with a median nest success of 82,6%. Additionally, 1,082 nests (10%) were relocated in situ to safer areas of the beach, mainly to mitigate the risks associated with light pollution.

At the end of October, track direction was recorded for naturally hatching nests on Costa Fragata Nature Reserve, one of the main nesting beaches heavily affected by light pollution. The results show that, especially on the sections closer to the city, the impact of light pollution was much greater than anticipated, with an average of **25% of hatchlings orientating to the city instead of the ocean**, even on nests that would have been considered "safe" from light pollution. These results showed the gravity of the situation for hatchling survival and the need to implement alternative solutions in place of unrealistic relocation strategies.

Approximately 62 dead turtles were recorded during the 2025 season. Of these, 55 deaths were attributed to poaching, representing an estimated mortality rate of 1.6%, the second lowest recorded to date. **Although mortality increased by 0.1%, 2025 recorded the lowest number of killed turtles to date.** Notably, 96% of the poached turtles were found on beaches without night patrols. Two turtles were killed by dogs, and three died from natural causes (e.g., entrapment among rocks or disorientation). **Patrol teams successfully rescued around 60 turtles**, most of them nesting females disoriented or trapped behind the nesting area.

Figure 13 - Left image shows conservation hatchery during an excavation activity and right image shows new turtles been born at the hatchery.

The drone patrols continued on the beaches of Costa Fragata, Algodoeiro, Murdeira, Monte Leão, Madama and Joaquim Petinha. Over the season an estimated total of **495 flights were conducted**, covering an approximate length of 25.6 kms of nesting beaches, most of them of difficult access. In addition, 14 special missions were conducted with the military in the beaches with highest poaching. In total, **seven poachers were apprehended by our patrols and the authorities**, and more were found on nesting beaches with clear intent to poach nesting turtles (with knives/buckets) and were removed by the authorities or ran away from the patrol. It is important to note that these are our registers and there potentially more people apprehended or expelled from nesting beaches that we are unaware of.

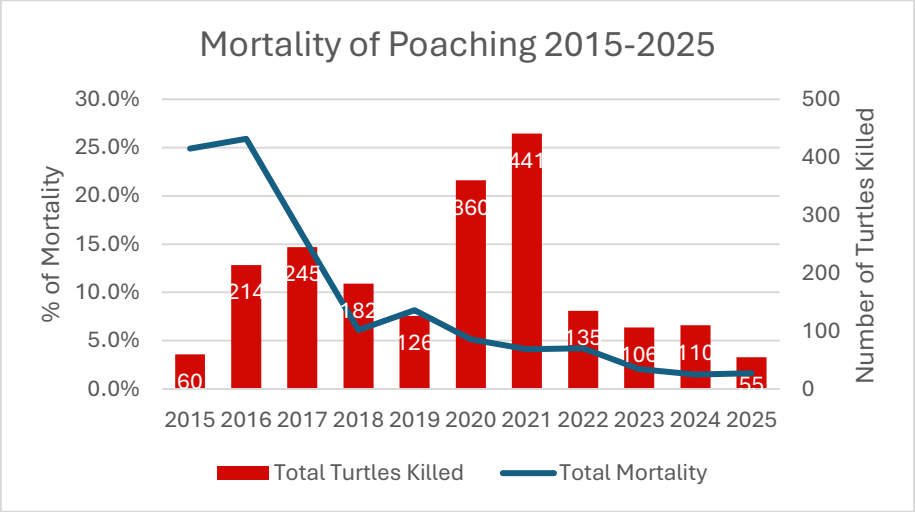

Figure 14 – Trend of the total number of turtles registered as poached in the last years (red columns) and mortality rate (blue line). 2025 saw the lowest number of turtles killed since the start of our work in 2015.

Figure 15 – On top, the patrol measuring a loggerhead turtle after laying her eggs. On the bottom, the drone pilot doing an early mission from our field camp in Costa Fragata.

Finally, in November our organization facilitated a three-days' workshop with representative of the different sea turtle conservation groups of the country. During the workshop, organized and funded by TAOLA+ network, we reviewed past conservation work and new findings before co-creating the new strategy for the conservation of sea turtles in Cabo Verde. The new five-year plan is structured in seven priorities and a transversal theme, with specific actions listed by priority for each theme. The plan will inform nation-wide conservation efforts and will be used to leverage new donors.

3. Seabirds and Osprey Conservation project

In 2025, the Seabirds Conservation project focused on understanding better the threats from Invasive Alien Species (IAS), strengthening its monitoring, and engaging communities, in the final year of a three-year national program funded by the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation and coordinated by BirdLife Africa.

To increase our knowledge on the IAS around seabird colonies, specially feral dogs, cats and rodents, we deployed food stations montored with camera traps to habituate animals to specific areas, preparing future trapping operations with the City Hall of Sal. The drone pilot collaborated with the team to detect dog packs at night, but strong winds and the presence of breeding ospreys limited the use of this technology. Two dog traps were set in Serra Negra, home of the largest Red-billed tropicbird colony, combined with new 4G camera traps combned with solar panels. This technology allowed us to monitor traps in real time and avoid leaving animals confined for long periods. Over nearly three months, only two dogs were captured and taken to the municipal kennel, while at least five dogs and two cats were detected roaming freely.

To control and monitor the presence of rodents we fabricated non-lethal baits. Up to 20 of those baits were placed as a biosecurity measure in the Rabo de Junco islet, a seabird hotspot classified internationally as an Important Bird Area. None were consumed, confirming that **the islet remains free of mammalian invasive species** (no dogs and cats are present). On the other side, 96 bait stations were installed in Serra Negra and Cadjetinha colonies, revealing high rat and mouse activity near nests and underscoring the need for continued control.

Figure 16 – Dog trap and 4G camera trap with solar panel installed in the colony of Serra Negra, where 2 dogs were trapped and brought the municipal kennel (left). Some of the hand-made non-lethal baits used to detect the presence of rodents and used as biosecurity measure in Rabo de Junco islet.

During the year, over 95 visits were conducted in the colonies of Serra Negra, Monte Leão, Cadjetinha/Furna and Rabo de Junco Islet to continue with the regular monitoring of nests and the ringing of new chicks and adults. In total, **we ringed 305 new seabirds from five different species**, including 15 Cabo Verde shearwaters, 38 Cabo Verde storm petrels and 3 White-faced storm petrel, all endemic to Cabo Verde. In 2025 we also received nine seabirds found lost in the beaches or because of light pollution, including five Red-billed tropicbird, two Cabo Verde little shearwater and two Cabo Verde storm petrel. All of them safely released after some time of recovery. Sadly, in 2025 **we registered up to 29 Red-billed tropicbirds predated** by dogs (15), crows (8) and cats (6).

The osprey breeding season of 2025 was a succes, with **11 breeding pairs and 10 chicks fledged and ringed**. Sadly, two of those chicks were found later dead, presumably after being attacked by stray dogs. Before the fledging of all the chicks, we deployed state-of-the-art GPS trackers in 5 of the chicks. This project is part of a PhD research from a Cabo-verdean student from the University of Coimbra, in Protugal. The GPS have a very long battery live, as they have a small solar panel that keeps charging it. This is the first time that ospreys in Cabo Verde are being tracked. By the end of 2025, two out of the five trackers are still active, with one osprey staying in Sal Island and the other in the ilsand of Maio.

In 2025, our bird team collaborated with the NGO Biosfera I in **the elaboration of the first Atlas of Birds of Cabo Verde**. The work consited in surveying the whole island two times during the year (before and after the rainy season), through visual surveys and deploying sound-recorders, with its las deployment in December. Currently, the data is being analysed by SPEA (Sociedade Portuguesa para o Esudo das Aves) in order to finish the atlas.

Figure 17 – We deployed 5 GPS trackers in chick on their last phase of development (left). Once fledged, the trackers allow us to follow the chicks during their trip to potential new breeding areas. As an example, one of the chicks travelled all the way to Maio island, which is currently exploring, leaving behind the island of Boa Vista.

Complementary conservation and awareness activities included designing educational and scientific board games about seabird (with the support of IA) and painting a mural on seabirds and artisanal fishers in Pedra Lume.

On the social side, the project used 2024 survey results to identify Sal and Santiago as some of the islands with high seabird poaching and consumption. With the support of a behaviour change research group from Oxford, we designed a behaviour change pilot campaign for both islands with schools and community groups, focusing on children and youth. Activities were implemetned in three local associations from Sal with visits to the seabird colonies, artistic workshops and a summer camp that culminated in a community exhibition and festival in Palmeira. As part of a national seabird initiative, a similar summer camp was replicated in Santiago, engaging more than 1,153 students from four schools from the capital Praia.

Finally, we **designed and produced the official Protected Areas sings for Serra Negra and Rabo de Junco Nature Reserves** that hosts some of the most important seabird colonies of the islands. In total 10 signs are produced and are waiting an official event to be installed. Two other interpretation signs are being designed at this moment. In addition, we desinged a new infosheet with information on the seabirds of Sal Island and instruction on what to do when people find some losts.

Figure 18 – Informative leaflet about Cabo Verde's seabirds produced and shared during the different awareness activities.

Figure 19 – Board games were developed to raise awareness about the diversity of seabird species on Sal Island. On the left, a game for kids explaining the life cycle and threads of the Red-billed tropicbird. On the right, a cards game with all the seabird species of the island that will be shared among fishermen.

Figure 20 – Wall mural depicting the interaction between seabirds and artisanal fishers painted in the fishing community of Pedra de Lume.

Figure 21 – On the left, one of the activities carried out in the capital of the country, Praia, in the island of Santiago. On the right, the final event of the Summer Camp in Sal Island with music and exposition of artistic projects.

2025 marked also the end of the funding cycle for the seabird conservation national initiative, coordinated by BirdLife International and funded by Hans Wilsdorf Foundation. For this reason, by the end of 2025 a group of seven national conservation NGOs, all of them members of TAOLA+, presented a joint project proposal directly to the Hans Wilsldorf Foundation for the conservation of seabirds for the next three years.

4. Marine Monitoring Program

Despite a reduced team at the beginning of the year, the Marine Monitoring Program maintained its focus on establishing a **new Marine Protected Area (MPA) at Parda Reef**, strengthening shark monitoring, and advancing community-based research.

The proposal for the Parda Reef MPA was finalised using three years of ecological data, combining the use of different mythologies such as drone and BRUV surveys, eDNA, sea turtle tracking and land surveys. A communications campaign using social media posts, videos and infographics promoted the proposed MPA, and three posters summarizing ecological and socioeconomic information were designed and shared with partners. The campaign finished with a public presentation with community groups, and the collection of over 500 signatures—above the legal requirement of 300—before formal submission to the National Directorate of Environment by the end of March. This process also marked the successful closure of the "Participatory Management and Conservation of the Shark Sanctuary of Parda Bay" project.

Figure 22 - On the left, the map presented to the National Directorate of Environment with the new proposed MPA. On the right, one of the three infographics created to support the proposal.

To consolidate long-term shark research, the team recruited and trained a new Marine Coordinator and three Young Environmental Ambassadors, the last as part of a summer professional internship program. Over the year, multiple field campaigns at Parda Reef and nearby sites resulted in the tagging of **22 new juvenile lemon** sharks, while previously tagged sharks were observed. BRUV deployments documented residency patterns and occurrences of key species such as tiger sharks, nurse sharks and green turtles. Finally, we implemented a new methodology to monitor shark movement around Parda reef with the use of acoustic tags. Seven receivers were installed around Parda reef, and **4 acoustic tags were deployed** in juvenile and adult lemon sharks.

Fieldwork also included landing surveys in the fishing communities of Pedra de Lume and Santa Maria, complemented by coastal mapping using drone-based orthophotography. Lastly, bi-weekly monitoring kits

exchanges were conducted among Guardians of the Sea fishers from Santa Maria, Pedra de Lume, and Palmeira to promote sustainable fishing practices and community engagement.

Another highlight of the year for the program is the official identification of Parda Reef's ecological importance as an Important Shark and Ray Area (ISRA), and the project's results were presented internationally at the UN Oceans Conference in Nice, raising Cabo Verde's profile in marine conservation.

Figure 23 – On the left, deployment of one of the acoustic receivers around Parda Reef. On the right, a juvenile black-tip shark being measured begore inserting a PIT tag.

Figure 24 – A sub-adult lemon shark during the work to insert an acoustic tag in Parda Reef.

Under the PaMAR project, the program deepened its socio-economic and governance work with fishing communities by combining Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis, gender analysis and marine resource-use mapping. These actions were implemented through participatory workshops, interviews and field surveys in key fishing communities, and culminated in feedback sessions with fishers and fishmongers and a GAP analysis workshop focused on strengthening the Guardians of the Sea initiative and future co-management approaches.

5. Sustainable Fisheries Program

During 2025, the Sustainable Fisheries Program built on the legacy of the project "Empowering Cabo Verde communities towards responsible practices in artisanal fisheries", that concluded in March after three years of implementation, and continued to strengthen community-based management, with a special focus on strengthening the role of fishmongers' and their entrepreneurship capacity and building national cooperation.

The program concluded its three-year Darwin-funded project, which expanded the Guardians of the Sea (GoS) network to four additional islands and represented the first national, multi-partner initiative on sustainable fisheries in Cabo Verde. Before the project closed, the team organized a national exchange in Sal with Guardians of the Sea from Brava, Fogo, Santo Antão, São Vicente and Sal, to reinforce engagement and share experiences. Educational posters on minimum catch sizes for commercial fish were placed in all bus stops on the island, and a final workshop with Sal's Guardians of the Sea reviewed the strategy for the coming year. Finally, we concluded **the installation of a new solar power plant in the Fishers Association of Palmeira**, with a capacity to generate 12,2 kWp, which is reducing their electric bill and allowed them to use again an old ice machine that had to stop using due to the high electric costs. By the end of the year, works started to install a second plant in the Association of Fishermen of Santa Maria.

Figure 25 – Solar panels installed on the roof of the Association of Fishers of Palmeira.

From August to October, the program continued with the trial of circular hooks and SharkGuard devices to reduce shark–fisher interactions, in collaboration with the Guardians of the Sea and supported by 55 onboard surveys. New equipment was purchased to upgrade monitoring and safety kits of some Guardians of the Sea, some of them originally bought in 2020 when we started implementing the program. All the work with the Guardians of the Sea was implemented by new staff member, Bruno Soares, previously internship with the seabird team, and now hired as a community facilitator/marine technician.

2025 was an important year for the women fishmongers of Sal. Our team, with funds from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), facilitated the process of **creation of the Association of Fishmongers of Sal**, the second association of its kind in Cabo Verde. The process started with many meetings with fishmongers from Santa Maria, Espargos and Palmeira, the creation of their first Action Plan and, finally, the organization of the first General Assembly of the new association, approving its governing bodies and awaiting publication in the national register. The association represents no over 26 fishmongers from the different communities of Sal.

Through the same project, a capacity building and incubation program started, with the objective of supporting fishmongers to develop their business ideas. From the 25 fishmongers that started the process, only 8 were selected to continue with the incubation, and are now currently finalizing the program. Training included themes such as Generating Business Ideas, Financial Organization and Financial Education.

Figure 26 - First General Assembly of the new Fishmongers Association of Sal, with the signature of the new governing bodies.

The team participated in several national events, such as the First National Workshop of the Guardians of the Sea on Maio Island and a consortium workshop on Fogo, contributing to the development of a national Code of Conduct and Standard Operating Procedures for community-led surveillance.

Finally, a new multi-partner proposal for The Oceans Partnership Grant was co-developed, integrating experience from the seabirds and fisheries projects and bringing together four national NGOs and government partners. This project would have guaranteed the continuation of the work done by both Seabird Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries programs. However, the proposal was not selected by the grant maker.

Figure 27 – One of the sessions of the fishmongers during the business incubation initiative.

Figure 27 – Group picture of the 1st National Workshop of the Guardians of the Sea in Maio island.

6. Education and Awareness

In 2025, the Education and Awareness Program grew significantly in scale and impact, reaching a record 5.451 participants through a renewed approach that places children and young people at the centre of our environmental actions. The team worked to innovate and pilot new community engagement models, strengthening traditional partnerships while bringing in new allies who joined with enthusiasm and commitment.

Throughout the year, **we delivered over 134 in-person classes on key themes** such as the ecological role of sharks, seabirds, Protected Areas and endemic plants, often using open conversations and intergenerational exchanges to deepen understanding. The **Young Environmental Ambassadors initiative continued to expand and now counts 72 active members**, who increasingly act as protagonists and multipliers of environmental messages within their communities.

A major innovation was the **first Professional Internship Programme**, selected through an internal call and allowing youth to choose areas of interest. Eight young people completed three-month placements in Environmental Education, Sea Turtle Monitoring, Communications and Marine Monitoring, while five additional volunteers supported night patrols and one Ambassador joined the Education and Sustainable Tourism team as an assistant. In parallel, we organised the **first youth exchange between Sal and Boa Vista**, involving 30 Young Environmental Ambassadors from Sal in a visit that included clean-ups and exchanges with local conservation NGOs, with the objective of encouraging the creation of a similar group on Boa Vista.

Outdoor engagement was reinforced through activities such as Trek Sal, which in its latest edition brought together 50 participants for a 25 km educational hike, and two additional environmental walks with 90 participants covering 19 km in total, all designed to connect people to nature and promote healthy, sustainable lifestyles. Environmental visits complemented classroom work, with 16 guided visits to the turtle and native plant nurseries, as well as to Serra Negra Nature Reserve and the Red-billed tropicbird colony, giving participants first-hand contact with local biodiversity and conservation work.

Beach clean-ups reached a new record in 2025, with **14 interventions mobilising 500 participants and resulting in the removal of approximately 20 tonnes of waste** from coastal areas. These actions not only improved local habitats for fauna and flora but also demonstrated the power of collective action and community responsibility for environmental protection.

International volunteer engagement also increased through the HomeStay Programme, which hosted 10 long-term volunteers from Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands, as well as 9 students from Queen Mary University of London. Their participation brought new perspectives and energy to local activities, strengthening intercultural exchange and shared commitment to conservation.

Our weekly radio programme “Ambiente em Destaque” remained a key communication tool, **broadcasting 104 radio programs during the year** on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Together with our face-to-face actions, the programme helped maintain a strong public focus on themes such as sea turtles, seabirds, endemic plants, protected areas and sustainable fishing.

The **second edition of the Youth and Environment Forum** consolidated this space for youth dialogue, bringing together 80 students from secondary schools in Santa Maria and Espargos to discuss biodiversity conservation and the role of each person in protecting nature, on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity. These conversations helped strengthen young people’s sense of responsibility and agency in environmental issues.

Over the last two years, the Education and Awareness Program has grown substantially thanks to the active engagement of the community and especially the youth of Sal, who have taken on leadership roles in spreading environmental values and messages. Building on this momentum, in the coming year we plan to consolidate ongoing actions and expand the Young Environmental Ambassadors initiative to the island of Boa Vista, in collaboration with local NGOs, further strengthening our contribution to environmental education and awareness in Cabo Verde.

In addition to all these activities, our communication team continued with the production of our TV program “*Mundo Sustentável*” (Sustainable World), with **10 new episodes for this second season**. The episodes are being broadcasted regularly in the TV channel TCSM, which emits at national level. Although we don’t have numbers of TV audience, the videos have been seen, at least, by 25.699 people on our Facebook account.

Figure 28 – Examples of the education activities in different centres with the collaboration of staff from the different programs of the organization (top line). Bellow, a picture of part of the group participating in the new edition of the TrekSal during a stop in the Protected Area of Serra Negra, nearby the breeding colony of red-billed tropicbirds.

Figure 29 - Visit of the Young Environmental Ambassadors from Sal and a youth group from Boa Vista to the sea turtle field camp of the NGO Bios.CV.

Figure 30 – Beach clean-up activities carried out in collaboration with local communities in Igrejinha.

7. Sustainable Tourism and Fundraising

In 2025, **we had 68,9% more visitors to our sea turtle conservation centre** and public events, from 18.506 in 2024 to 31.258 in 2025. In total, our team conducted over 200 outreach activities targeting tourists, including setting-up an information table inside different hotels three nights per week. Public excavations in our conservation hatchery, with an average of 300 tourists per day, continued to be one of the top things to do in Sal Island (highest rating in TripAdvisor), and gave us the perfect opportunity to educate them about the importance of nature conservation and sea turtle protection.

Thanks to this positive trend, the amount of unrestricted funds continued to increase through our strong bet in fundraising activities. The continued improvement of our donation mechanisms, with better online experience, helped **increase the fundraising by 15%** compared from 2024 (with 45% increase in online donation and 9% offline). This has allowed us to reach 26% of unrestricted funds this year, surpassing our strategic objective of reaching at least 20% of unrestricted funds. Yet the challenges to develop new fundraising strategies persist, mainly due to the lack of local capacity in this area.

This year we created different material that contributed to improve the information available for visitors. This included two new pages on our website: one with information about the sea turtle season in Cabo Verde and a second one with a guide for conscious and responsible tourism. We also produced new visual informative tools to inform about the changes in the implementation of last year's new sea turtle observation law. We reached out to tourists, hotels and tour operators to share the correct information about the new regulations and to share this material. In addition, the team also delivered training for 85 people working in the tourism industry.

By the end of the year, the work to renew our website was almost finished, with 75% done and published, and 25% in final reviews. This include 30 pages updated and redesigned and 9 new pages, including one about the sharks of Sal. In addition, the new exhibition about the sea turtles of Sal was finally produced, although it was not launched until the beginning of 2026. The increased visibility and the improved visual information material also allowed us to reach a **record number of international volunteers joining us**, with a total of 127 volunteers coming from 14 different countries (and increase of 61% compared with 2024).

In general, these results are important milestones for the organization. They will increase our financial resilience and strengthen our investment capacity, including staff retention. A clear example is that, thanks to our own reserve funds, at the beginning of 2026 we will be able to continue with several project while waiting for new confirmed funds (including 6 permanent staff).

Figure 31 – Field visits to the Protected Areas with the two groups of tour guides. On top, the group of students of the Professional grade of tour guides. On the bottom, some of the guides of a private nature-based excursions company from Sal.

Figure 32 – Information sheet created to inform about the new regulations for sea turtle watching excursions.

Figure 33 – Example of 2 of the 5 posters designed for the exhibition of sea turtles. The designs of the turtles are real-size, making the posters 2 meters tall. Each of the 5 posters represents one of the five sea turtles present in the waters of Cabo Verde.

Coinciding with the 10-year anniversary of Projeto Biodviersidade, we organized two consecutive events, a private one with our staff and our partners and collaborators, and a public one in the beach of Santa Maria with all the community. In addition, we designed a logo for the anniversary and produced special t-shirts for the team, as well as launched a video to commemorate the 10 years.

Figure 34 – Event of commemoration of our 10-year anniversary with the partners and collaborators. During the event we gave some gifts made with acacia wood to the partners that have been collaborating with us since the very first years.

Figure 35 – Second day of commemoration in the beach of Santa Maria, with the participation of the community with games, music and a traditional "catchupa".

Financial Report:

Summary of expenses 2025

Table 1 – Annual expenses from 2025 by general category. 75% of all costs were direct project costs, while general costs were 19%. The program with the largest budget was the Sea Turtle Conservation Campaign, with 28% of the total budget. The second biggest expenditure was for the Marine Monitoring Program, with 15%.

General Expenses		Total CVE		Total EUR
General Costs	**CVE**	**12 936 727**	**€**	**117 324**
Fundraising and Tourism Outreach	**CVE**	**4 221 130**	**€**	**38 282**
Programme expenses	**CVE**	**52 755 309**	**€**	**478 441**
Programmes: Education & Awareness	CVE	1 904 615	€	17 273
Programmes: Marine Monitoring Programme	CVE	10 687 250	€	96 923
Programmes: Sea Turtle Conservation Programme	CVE	19 724 138	€	178 879
Programmes: Seabirds Conservation	CVE	5 253 034	€	47 640
Programmes: Sustainable Fisheries Programme	CVE	4 103 839	€	37 218
Programmes: Terrestrial Conservation Programme	CVE	8 249 973	€	74 820
Programmes: International Volunteering Programme	CVE	2 832 461	€	25 688
	CVE	**69 913 167**	**€**	**634 047**

Summary of income 2025

Table 2 – Total income during the year 2025, with 45% of unrestricted funds, including the grant from Fondation Hans Wilsdorf.

Category	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total EUR
Foundations and Grants	€ 422 187,90	€ 236 048,79	**€ 658 236,69**
Individual Donations		€ 81 010,99	**€ 81 010,99**
Volunteer Fees	€ 950,00	€ 42 852,91	**€ 43 802,91**
Corporative Donations	€ 15 988,53	€ 16 809,10	**€ 32 797,62**
Universities	€ 15 156,00		**€ 15 156,00**
Government	€ 10 338,73		**€ 10 338,73**
Other NGOs	€ 1 664,17		**€ 1 664,17**
Bank Interests		€ 396,74	**€ 396,74**
Total	**€ 466 285,33**	**€ 377 118,53**	**€ 843 403,86**

Balance

By the end of the year, a positive balance of 190.657€ was registered. This balance results from the difference of **income** (843.404€), **registered expenses** (634.047€) and **delayed expenses** (18.700€). The delayed expenses represent funds that are allocated for specific support, but the use of those were delayed until 2026. In 2025 these are sub-grants to community groups, such as the new Fishmonger's Association of Sal. The remaining 190.657€ are part of the 210.000€ from the organizational development grant that the organization decided to invest in the coming years in the construction of our headquarters.

	Total EUR	
Income	€	843 404
Expenses	€	634 047
Delayed expenses	€	18 700
Balance 2025	**€**	**190 657**

Disclamer: this report shows an internal analises of the annual financial exercise. It is not intended to replace external financial reports. This will normally be ready by june of the current year. The report is the closest look at the states of the accounts when it was prepared. Bare in mind that not always funds arrive before the expenses are made, or vice versa, within the same year. This may generate an inbalance of income/outcome.